

Application to Amend SE03-CR-23 to Allow the Construction and Operation of a Wastewater Treatment Disposal System at the Warrenton-Fauquier Airport

On May 19, 2003 the Board of Supervisors approved a Special Exception permit for the operation of a wastewater treatment and disposal system located at the County airport. The system was designed with a capacity of 8,800 gallons per day (gpd). The system consists of a central drip disposal drainfield and a wastewater treatment facility generally consisting of underground settling tanks, secondary wastewater treatment units and a central pump station to dose the drainfields. The system serves a portion of the Midland Service District comprised of the airport and surrounding properties that are zoned for business purposes. It has been permitted by the Virginia Health Department consistent with the conditions placed by the Special Exception permit that require a reserve drainfield.

The system was designed with a capacity of 8,800 gallons per day (gpd). The Special Exception limited capacity to a Phase I concept of 4,400 gpd and required the balance of the drainfield capacity to serve as a reserve. Expansion beyond Phase I was tied to the development of a discharge permit that would allow the balance of the drainfield to be utilized and provide for a direct discharge to serve as a reserve in the event that the drainfield were to fail.

A number of circumstances have occurred that lead to the request to amend the Special Exception permit. Following the approval of the Special Exception permit the wastewater facility has been constructed and is now operational. In order to serve customers with Phase II of the airport sewer district the County contracted with Whitman Requardt to assess the possibility of a direct discharge permit that in effect would have removed the requirement for a 100% reserve drainfield. The results of this investigation identified costs and requirements that were not financially feasible given the limited service area surrounding the airport. Therefore expansion to Phase II customers is not achievable by establishing a direct discharge capability.

Subsequently, the County acquired additional property near the existing drainfield, see attached plat, and received a request for sewer service from Riverside Mulch, located within the Phase II service area. The services of a soil scientist were engaged to explore the identification of another area to meet the reserve drainfield requirements. This effort was successful and the Health Department has certified sufficient capacity in this area of 18.79 acres. It is requested that Condition #3 be replaced with a requirement that a reserve drainfield area be certified by the Health Department to achieve the 100% requirement of the service district.

Another requirement of SE03-CR-23 is for an operating agreement with WSA prior to the operation of the system. The attached agreement was negotiated. However after considering the costs of the agreement it has been determined that it is far more cost effective for the County to obtain other professional services to assist with the operation of the plant. Since airport staff is on site, the daily monitoring of the system is a part of routine maintenance procedures.

Professional services of Dewberry and Davis have been engaged to assist in evaluating the collection system and to review plans for future connections. An annual contract with Dominion Septic Inc. has been established to maintain and monitor the treatment system. It is requested that Condition #1 of the permit be amended to require the County be responsible for maintenance and operation of the system in a manner consistent with the requirements of the Health Department. It is requested that Condition #2 pertaining to the transfer of the system upon the issuance of a discharge permit be eliminated since the option to acquire a discharge permit is not anticipated.

It is requested that Conditions #4 and #5 be eliminated since these conditions pertain to the facility that contemplated the issuance of a discharge permit. The revised request incorporating an approved area to meet the requirements of a reserve drainfield capable of handling 8,800 gallons per day effectively establishes an alternative to the suggested discharge permit as a means of meeting the reserve requirement. The area initially designated as the service area remains in place and authorization to serve property within the service area is requested up to the capacity of the system of 8,800 gallons per day.

Finally it is requested that Condition # 6 also be eliminated. This is not required by the Health Department and the design and storage capacity in the system would allow the system to be safely operated without power for an extended period. If needed a portable generator could be brought to the site or tanks pumped if additional capacity were required prior to the restoration of commercial power.

The Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution on August 9, 2007 authorizing the application to amend the Special Exception permit.